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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT
(INTERIM)

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
(W. F. Young, M.B., D.P.H.)

FOR THE YEAR 1940.

PRELIMINARY NOTE

Ministry of Health Circular 2314 of March, 1941 required that Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Health for the year 1940 should be on lines similar to those for 1939, viz., they should be confined to essential and urgent matters which had affected the Public Health during the year, and should pay special attention to such of these as arose from or were connected with the War.

The Circular suggested further that statistical and other records should be preserved so that after the termination of the War a report may be written which will deal more fully with the period from the beginning of 1939 to the end of the last complete year, separate statistics being given for each year in order that the annual records may, as far as is practicable, be continuous and complete.

These requirements have been complied with in connection with the restricted form of Report which I now have the honour to present to the Council.

SECTION A.
Statistics and Social Conditions in the Area

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population, mid-1940:- 16,780

Number of inhabited houses according to the Rate Books:- 4,587

Rateable Value, (October, 1940):- £57,314

Sum represented by a penny rate:- £218

	England and Wales	Newcastle-under-Lyme R.D.
Birth Rate	14.6	14.4
Death Rate	14.3	13.8[x]
Infantile Mortality Rate	55	66
[x]Comparability Factor	0.95	

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

There was no evidence that the War had had any noticeable harmful effect on the general health of the population.

With regard to nutrition it was found possible to form a rough estimate of the nutritional state of children up to fourteen years of age, and among these standards were at least maintained.

In the rural parts of the District the extent of unemployment continued to be negligible, and in the semi-urban parts a further decline took place, largely the result of the engagement of women in various kinds of war-work. The question of the care of children during their parents' absence has had the careful attention of Health Visitors throughout the District, and except in one or two isolated cases there was no evidence of neglect.

EVACUEES.

In June 1940 one hundred and ninety-five children were received from a south-east coastal town. Their general condition on arrival was satisfactory and their cleanliness of a high standard. During the year a considerable number of children returned to north-westerly industrial centres.

Billeting arrangements continued to be highly satisfactory and much credit is due both to the officials concerned and to the adoptive parents.

A few cases of impetigo, scabies, and bed-wetting came to notice. These conditions were adequately dealt with at sick-bays, school clinics, infant welfare centres and by Health Visitors.

Up to the end of the year there was no evidence that the reception of children from other parts of the country had had any influence on the incidence of infectious disease.

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

There is no change to record in the provision detailed in previous Reports, and during the year there was no change in personnel.

As a result of the War further additions continued to be made to the duties of the Staff, and during several periods the burden became very heavy.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

Water.

During the year the need for care in the use of water was brought to the notice of the public by means of leaflets and posters.

A review was made of arrangements for continuing supplies in case of air-raid damage, and the following is a short summary.

The District is fortunate in having eight sources of supply from mains, of which three are from large public undertakings, (two outside the District and one inside). In case of damage supplies could be maintained in a number of areas by making inter-connections where mains adjoin. In several areas wells and springs that were in use before mains were installed still remain possible sources of supply. Analysis of the water from a few of these gave satisfactory results. Copies of a Central Council for Health Education leaflet entitled "How to purify your drinking water in an emergency" were obtained and held in reserve for distribution in case of need. Arrangements were made for carting water if the necessity arose, either from main supplies or from wells and springs, and these included the purchase of three tanks of 100 gallons and one of 200 gallons capacity.

With regard to chlorination of main supplies the position was as follows:-

(a) Public Supplies.

Staffordshire Potteries Water Board	Chloramine treatment being carried out.
Audley Water Works.	Chlorination plant supplied but had not been connected by September, 1941.
Nantwich R.D.C. Waterworks	The Nantwich R.D.C. water engineer informed the Clerk to this Council in August 1940 that his Council had decided to adopt a scheme for the chlorination of the supply from the Bearstone source (which supplies a considerable part of this District), and would put the scheme into operation as soon as possible after consultation with the Ministry of Health. Up to September 1941 no plant had been installed.
Market Drayton.	An order for plant had been placed by 1940.

(b) Private Supplies.

Maer.	"Some of the Estate supplies are to be chlorinated."
Whitmore and Acton.	Periodical chlorination to be carried out.
Aston.	"Not considered necessary" by owner.
Hales.	Not undertaken.

Sanitary Inspection.

As a result of war-time conditions an increased amount of non-sanitary work was imposed on the Sanitary Inspector's Department. Routine inspection had as a result practically to be abandoned, and attention confined to urgent matters only.

SECTION D.

Housing.

The tendency to a shortage of houses has increased a little during the year. To meet this in part it has been found possible to render a few houses that had been condemned temporarily fit for habitation.

Several cases of overcrowding came to notice, and in a few of them abatement could not be made possible.

Routine inspection of housing conditions could not be undertaken. Defects that came to notice through complaints and otherwise were dealt with as far as possible, but increasing difficulty was experienced in obtaining materials for repairs

On the whole it may be said that by the end of the year there was no serious falling-off in housing standards in the District. It is fortunate that the needs of the more poorly housed sections of the population were seen to shortly before the war started and new building became no longer possible.

SECTION E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Milk Supply.

Inspection of cow-sheds and dairies had to be very much curtailed.

The County Council is the Authority for milk-sampling, and the following figures, taken with permission from the County Medical Officer of Health's Annual Report, compare samples taken in this District during the year with those in the County generally.

Percentages of Samples taken.

	Cleanliness		T. B. found
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	
Staffs. County	60	40	5.8
Newcastle-under-Lyme R.D.	63	37	0.0

Meat.

Since early in the war slaughtering has been centralised in the neighbouring City of Stoke-on-Trent.

Some increase has occurred in killing for stock-owners' own consumption, and this has been supervised wherever possible.

The carcases of stock killed as an emergency measure have been sent to the City abattoir.

Food Inspection.

In a few instances supplies of bacon and butter released from cold storage had to be condemned.

During the year both of the Council's Sanitary Inspectors attended courses on the inspection of food contaminated by poison-gas.

SECTION F.

Notifiable Infectious Disease.

The following Table shows the numbers of cases notified during the year, and gives the corresponding numbers for the year 1939.

	1940	1939
Scarlet Fever	24	33
Diphtheria*	2	1
Whoopingcough**	19	1
Measles**	73	2
Erysipelas	9	7
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	4	2
Pneumonia†	26	7
Cerebro-spinal Fever	3	0
Smallpox	0	0
Enteric Fever	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	0	2

* 43 children of less than five years of age were immunised during the year.

** Became notifiable in October, 1939.

† Notifiable cases only.

Deaths from notifiable infectious disease:-

Whoopingcough, 1.
Cerebro-spinal fever, 1.

Deaths from pneumonia (notifiable and non-notifiable) 5.

In the Table below comparison is made of the incidence and death rates of certain notifiable diseases in England and Wales as a whole and in Newcastle-under-Lyme Rural District.

	England & Wales	Newcastle-under-Lyme R. D.
Notifications.		
Enteric Fever.	0.07	0.00
Cerebro-spinal Fever	0.32	0.18
Whoopingcough	1.34	1.13
Diphtheria	1.16	0.12
Erysipelas	0.33	0.54
Smallpox	0.00	0.00
Measles	10.24	4.35
Pneumonia (Notifiable cases only)	1.20	1.56
Scarlet Fever	1.63	1.43
Deaths.		
Enteric Fever	0.00	0.00
Whoopingcough	0.02	0.06
Diphtheria	0.06	0.00
Measles	0.02	0.00
Scarlet Fever	0.00	0.00

TUBERCULOSIS.

The numbers of new cases notified and coming to knowledge otherwise than by notification were as follows:-

Notifications	1940	1939
Pulmonary	18	15
Non-Pulmonary	7	3
Deaths		
Pulmonary	6	7
Non-Pulmonary	1	0

The incidences and deathrates for pulmonary tuberculosis in the District were as follows:-

	1940	1939
Incidence	1.07	0.93
Deathrate	0.36	0.43

The incidence and deathrate for pulmonary tuberculosis for England and Wales are not yet available.

CAUSES OF DEATH

Newcastle-under-Lyme Rural District, 1940.

	M.	F.
All Causes	126	94
1. Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	0	0
2. Cerebro-spinal Fever	1	0
3. Scarlet Fever	0	0
4. Whoopingcough	0	1
5. Diphtheria	0	0
6. Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	5	1
7. Other forms of Tuberculosis	0	1
8. Syphilitic Diseases	0	0
9. Influenza	5	7
10. Measles	0	0
11. Acute Polio-myelitis and Polio-encephalitis ..	0	0
12. Acute infectious Encephalitis	0	0
13. Cancer of buccal cavity & Oesophagus, (M) .. Uterus (F)	2	1
14. Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum	5	8
15. Cancer of Breast	0	3
16. Cancer of all other Sites	7	7
17. Diabetes	3	2
18. Intracranial Vascular Lesions	9	10
19. Heart Disease	28	18
20. Other Diseases of Circulatory System	5	0
21. Bronchitis	12	7
22. Pneumonia	3	2
23. Other Respiratory Diseases	3	2
24. Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	0	0
25. Diarrhoea, under two years	0	1
26. Appendicitis	0	0
27. Other digestive Diseases	4	3
28. Nephritis	7	1
29. Puerperal and post-abortive Sepsis	0	1
30. Other Maternal Causes	0	0
31. Premature Birth	1	2
32. Congenital Malformations: Birth Injuries: Infantile Diseases	4	2
33. Suicide	0	0
34. Road Traffic Accidents	4	0
35. Other Violent Causes	8	1
36. All other Causes	10	13